

WILLIAM L. DAVENPORT REFUGE
CLASS II NATURAL-SCIENTIFIC STATE NATURAL AREA

COUNTY: Polk

7.5' QUADRANGLE: Ducktown

PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: Blue Ridge Mountains

OWNERSHIP: State of Tennessee

ACREAGE: 120 Acres

YEAR DESIGNATED: 1997

DESCRIPTION: William Davenport Refuge is 120-acre natural area located in Polk County. It was named after the previous owner's father. The area is significant for ecological and historical reasons. The ecological aspects are exceptional due to the occurrence of a rare Southern Appalachian bog community. The area is significant from an historical standpoint since the land exists within the mine fields of Copper Basin, a physical feature that dominates extreme southeast Tennessee, a part of southwestern North Carolina, and northern Georgia. This region was mined extensively for copper over a 125-year period ending in 1987. The release of sulfur dioxide from the open-air roasting of the ore injured or killed most of the surrounding vegetation and logging removed the remaining forest leaving bare hills of exposed red soil. This stark environment became an important component to the area's heritage. Several projects were put in place over the years by a number of agencies in an attempt to restore the landscape. Millions of loblolly pine seedlings have been planted throughout the area. Many other herbaceous species, including several exotics, were also planted to control erosion. Loblolly and Virginia pine are abundant on the surrounding uplands.

This Southern Appalachian bog community occurs in the low areas along Brush Creek. It is an open to semi-open community and has a saturated substrate with naturally low fertility. The bogs contain a thick herbaceous layer of cranberry, ferns, grasses and sedges with a scattered shrub layer of blueberries, alder, holly and chokeberry. Due to lack of natural disturbance or an alteration of the natural hydrology, a canopy of red maples is now shading the area. A current management strategy is to thin the encroaching red maples. The botanical aspects are significant due to the presence of cranberry (*Vaccinium macrocarpon*) and tawny cotton-grass (*Eriophorum virginicum*), both rare species in Tennessee. This unusual bog community is a refugium of northern boreal species that migrated into the Blue Ridge during the last ice age.

SITE MANAGEMENT: Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, Region III, 464 Industrial Blvd., Crossville, TN 38555, phone (931) 484-9571. Division of Natural Heritage, 401 Church Street, 14th Floor L&C Tower, Nashville, TN 37243-0447, phone (615) 532-0431.

PUBLIC ACCESS: Access restricted; ecologically sensitive area. Access permitted by request only.

DIRECTIONS: William Davenport Refuge is located north of Ducktown along Brush Creek.